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Security Council

Seventy-second year

Provisional

7957th meeting
Friday, 2 June 2017, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Llorentty Solíz	(Bolivia (Plurinational State of))
Members:	China	Mr. Liu Jieyi
	Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
	Ethiopia	Mr. Alemu
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Italy	Mr. Cardi
	Japan	Mr. Kawamura
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Umarov
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Senegal	Mr. Seck
	Sweden	Mr. Skau
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Wilson
	United States of America	Mr. Gee
	Uruguay	Mr. Bermúdez

Agenda

The situation in Côte d'Ivoire

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Expression of sympathy following the terrorist attack in Kabul

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the members of the Security Council, I condemn in the strongest terms the reprehensible terrorist attack perpetrated in Kabul on innocent civilians of Afghanistan and of many other nations. The members of the Security Council extend their deepest sympathy to the families of the victims who lost their lives, and solidarity to the people and Government of Afghanistan. Please stand for a moment of silence in honour of the victims.

Expression of thanks to the outgoing President

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): As this is the first public meeting of the Security Council for the month of June, I should like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the Security Council, to pay tribute to His Excellency Mr. Elbio Rosselli, Permanent Representative of Uruguay, for his service as President of the Council for the month of May. I am sure I speak for all members of the Security Council in expressing deep appreciation to Ambassador Rosselli and his delegation for the great diplomatic skill with which they conducted the Council's business last month.

Congratulatory remarks to the newly elected members

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I should also like to take this opportunity to sincerely congratulate Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Kuwait, the Netherlands, Peru and Poland on their election as non-permanent members of the Security Council. We look forward with interest to their contribution to the work of the Council starting in 2018.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Côte d'Ivoire

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Côte d'Ivoire to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome His Excellency Mr. Marcel Amon-Tanoh, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Ms. Aïchatou Mindaoudou, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I now give the floor to Ms. Mindaoudou.

Ms. Mindaoudou (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank the members of the Security Council for giving me the opportunity to brief the Council, on behalf of the Secretary-General, on the most recent report on the situation in Côte d'Ivoire.

Today is a historic one in relations between Côte d'Ivoire and the Security Council. It is historic because it marks the removal of Côte d'Ivoire from the Council's agenda. It is also historic because Côte d'Ivoire was elected as a non-permanent member of the Security Council for a two-year mandate, which will begin in January 2018.

Let me warmly congratulate His Excellency Mr. Marcel Amon-Tanoh, Minister for Foreign Affairs, on Côte d'Ivoire's election to the Security Council.

Since I last briefed the Security Council in February (see S/PV.7880), a new Government has assumed power following legislative elections held in December 2016. The Senate is being established. What is remarkable is that for the first time in Côte d'Ivoire's political history, the three main political parties — Rassemblement des républicains (RDR), the Parti démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire and the Front populaire ivoirien (FPI) — all took part in and fielded candidates in the elections. It should be recalled that the legislative elections of 2000 were boycotted by the RDR and those of 2011 by the FPI. The latter boycott led to an increased presence of the RDR in the National Assembly, which gave an absolute majority to the ruling coalition of Rassemblement des houphouëtistes pour la démocratie et la paix. Although the FPI opposition party won only four seats of deputies in the elections in 2016, its leaders were clear on their intentions to fully play their roles as deputies. Such commitment is positive for democracy in Côte d'Ivoire.

In February, I told the Council that the security situation was generally stable despite the recurring movements of soldiers in January and February. Since my last briefing to the Council, similar movements took place on 12 and 14 May, when a faction of the Bouaké-based armed forces, mostly former members of the Forces nouvelles de Côte d'Ivoire, claimed payment for its participation in the resolution of the 2010-2011 post-election crisis. Those disruptions have spread to several parts of the country, causing the death of one person and injuring more than 20. On 22 and 23 May, demobilized ex-combatants of the Forces nouvelles, previously considered to be allies to the army, erected barricades and demonstrated in Bouaké and other parts of the country, calling for financial compensation from the Government. Three ex-combatants were killed during the confrontation with the police. Those two movements totally paralysed economic activities, particularly in Bouaké. During the incidents of 12 and 14 May, a large cache of weapons was discovered, thereby reviving, both internally and externally, a certain psychosis of armed violence.

In February, I felt that the soldiers' movements did not threaten the institutions or stability of the country and did not wish to resort to violence because the claims put forth by the soldiers were merely financial. That assessment remains unchanged. However, things have changed somewhat since the incidents that occurred in May. This time, the soldiers attacked civilians and certain political symbols. The recurrence of military movements confirms the residual challenges that remain to be met before we can consolidate the achievements of peacekeeping in Côte d'Ivoire. Those challenges were identified and documented in the special report of the Secretary-General of March 2016 (S/2016/297), which recommended the closure of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI), and in the Secretary-General's February report on Côte d'Ivoire (S/2017/89).

It is urgent that the Government, with the support of its partners, improve discipline within the armed forces and implement the reforms provided for by the 2016-2020 Military Planning Law. It is also imperative to ensure the full integration of ex-combatants into society. These incidents highlight, on the one hand the threats posed by impunity within the armed forces and, on the other, the imperative of ending impunity for human rights violations committed during the post-election crisis by the two parties in conflict, as well as the need for impartial justice.

However, the situation I have just described should not make us lose sight of the achievements of more than 14 years of peacekeeping made possible by bilateral, regional and international support. In April 2004, when UNOCI was deployed, Côte d'Ivoire was a country divided in two along a security zone policed by forces of the United Nations and the French. Violations of the ceasefire and serious violations of human rights were recurrent. Since the end of the post-electoral crisis in Côte d'Ivoire in 2011, significant progress has been made in all sectors. The political environment has improved, although much remains to be done, particularly in the areas of national reconciliation and social cohesion. The situations of human rights and transitional justice have progressed, albeit in an uneven and hesitant manner. Economic growth is continuing and steps need to be taken to ensure the equitable sharing of resources so that all sectors of society benefit from the dividends of peace. The security situation has greatly improved, but efforts have still to be made to establish responsible security forces that enjoy the trust of the population.

In just four weeks, on 30 June, UNOCI's closure will be official. This process has not been without challenges when we consider the two-month liquidation period granted by the Council. I am pleased to inform the Council that, in spite of everything, we are keeping to the 30 June deadline of closing the mission. All uniformed personnel left Côte d'Ivoire in February. The gradual reduction of the civilian staff was completed in April, and today only a reduced team of eight civilians remain in the Mission's core and liquidation teams. ONUCI's FM radio station was transferred to the Félix Houphouët Boigny Foundation for Peace Research in Yamoussoukro. It is broadcasting today as the Radio of Peace. Of the 63 UNOCI sites, 61 have been returned to their respective owners. Most of the mission's equipment has been removed from our books and their final disposal or destruction is under way. The liquidation process was conducted in strict compliance with the environmental standards set by the Secretariat.

Some members of the Council have asked me what lessons I have learned from experience in Côte d'Ivoire that might be useful in other contexts in which peacekeeping missions are deployed. In that regard, I

should like to highlight three essential lessons that I consider important to share.

The first lesson I would like to address is the most important. A peacekeeping operation can achieve its objectives and withdraw from a country only in a context in which the Government is a determined partner deeply committed to assuming its responsibilities to the people it serves. No peacekeeping mission can substitute for national political will and national efforts to resolve the problems that led to the conflict. There is no doubt that much remains to be done in order to meet all the remaining challenges, but Côte d'Ivoire has demonstrated its resolve to assume the responsibilities necessary for the country to return to its former position as the torchbearer of West Africa for peace, stability and economic prosperity.

The second lesson relates to the leadership of the Council. I would point to the risks that the Council was able to take that led to the success of UNOCI, starting with the strong political mandate bestowed upon my predecessors and myself and supported by the trust of the Security Council. In addition, the Council has been very supportive of inter-mission cooperation, allowing us to maximize the strategic and operational interdependence of neighbouring peacekeeping missions. The rapid reaction force established within UNOCI, with the potential to intervene in Liberia in support of mandate of the United Nations Mission in Liberia, is certainly one of the most progressive inter-agency cooperation initiatives in the history of United Nations peacekeeping. Where necessary, the Council has also been proactive in adjusting the successive mandates of UNOCI, based on regular assessments conducted by the Secretariat, in order to prevent the mission from bogging down.

The third and final lesson that I draw from UNOCI's experience is that a United Nations peacekeeping mission is much more likely to succeed in a context where there is a coalition of international partners working to achieve the same goal of peace, essentially in a policy framework with enhanced and concerted accountability measures. The foundation of UNOCI's success is based on many pillars: African Union mediation, the Economic Community of West African States deployment of peacekeeping troops that later become peacekeepers, advocacy by women members of the civil society organizations of the Mano River Union, the parallel deployment of French forces and the commitment of bilateral and multilateral partners.

Allow me to express my appreciation for the important role played by the Council in the return of peace to Côte d'Ivoire, including through the deployment of a peacekeeping mission. I salute the memory of all those who made the ultimate sacrifice in the service of UNOCI and express my gratitude to all troop- and police-contributing countries. My appreciation also goes to all UNOCI civilian and uniformed personnel who have served our mission with professionalism, dedication and a deep sense of duty to fulfil our mandate. It has been a great honour for me to have collaborated with those women and men. I also thank the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes whose role in Côte d'Ivoire has been and will continue to be essential.

I am also grateful to the regional, bilateral and multilateral partners whose contribution has enabled the United Nations to successfully close the chapter on peacekeeping in Côte d'Ivoire. Their unflagging support is key to consolidating lasting peacekeeping gains.

Last but not least, I would like to express my deep gratitude and my great admiration for the people and the Government of Côte d'Ivoire at all levels — local, regional and national. In reality, they were the determining factor for resolving the crisis and the conflict in their country. I am convinced that the daily, personal and collective investment of each Ivorian will make it possible to sustainably consolidate our hard-won peace.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Ms. Mindaoudou for her briefing.

I now give the floor to those members of the Security Council who wish to make statements.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): Today's meeting is exceptional and historic. Indeed, it is rare for the Security Council to meet on the occasion of closing a peacekeeping mission. Yet, we are here doing just that for the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI), which will be phased out by 30 June, under resolution 2284 (2016).

I would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for her briefing and especially for her work at the head of UNOCI over the past four years which, together with the work of her predecessor, has enabled us to reach this point today. France is very grateful.

This meeting is rendered even more historic as it follows the brilliant election in the General Assembly, this morning, of Côte d'Ivoire as a Security Council member for the biennium 2018-2019. Through its Minister for Foreign Affairs, I would like to warmly congratulate Côte d'Ivoire on its election. Its experience in peacekeeping will provide the Council a unique perspective to help us more effectively tackle the challenges of the world. We welcome the opportunity to work alongside Côte d'Ivoire over the next two years in our pursuit of international peace and security.

The upcoming departure of UNOCI is a turning point for Côte d'Ivoire, as it is for peacekeeping. We must take this opportunity to review the past, evaluate the present and prepare for the future.

First, we must assess our accomplishments in Côte d'Ivoire and draw lessons from them. In 28 days, UNOCI will close after more than 13 years of existence. At the height of the 2010-2011 crisis it consisted of approximately 11,000 uniformed personnel. I pay a special tribute to all UNOCI personnel — soldiers, policemen and civilians — who, over the years, have devoted themselves to the pursuit of peace and security in Côte d'Ivoire. I honour the memory of the 150 men and women who lost their lives in the course of that mission. Their sacrifice will never be forgotten.

UNOCI stood by the country through a complex trajectory, marked by the acute crisis from 2004 to 2011, but also accompanied by the hope of renewal and the successful recovery starting in 2011. We must draw useful peacekeeping lessons from such a resounding success. Several factors have helped over the years. First of all, the Council gave UNOCI a clear and flexible mandate which was adapted to on developments on the ground. Difficulties were met with a strengthened mandate and personnel increases. When the crisis abated, the Council transitioned UNOCI to best enable long-term stability. The Council also developed new tools adapted to the needs on the ground, such as the rapid reaction force.

Secondly, since its inception, UNOCI also participated in the political process which, pitfalls notwithstanding, provided it a clear road map, including an electoral timetable. The unity of the Council also provided UNOCI with the necessary support in order for it to carry out its mandate.

Thirdly, UNOCI has always enjoyed the united support of the international community. The United Nations, the Economic Community of West African States, the African Union and the bilateral and multilateral partners of Côte d'Ivoire came together in tense times. France also did its part, primarily through its ongoing support for UNOCI, under a Council mandate, through the French forces it deployed to Côte d'Ivoire throughout that period.

Finally, and importantly, UNOCI has enjoyed an excellent relationship with the host country based on trust and the pursuit of peace. It is an example to follow. That relationship has been an essential prerequisite to ensuring an effective transition.As a result, Côte d'Ivoire has now fully taken its destiny into its own hands. Today's Côte d'Ivoire has made great progress; it is no longer the deeply divided — politically and territorially — country of 2004 or 2011. Democratic life in the country has become normalized and strengthened; economic growth is contributing to its development; the security situation continues to improve, including at the border; and the country is a major player in its subregion in all areas. The people and the Government of Côte d'Ivoire have demonstrated their determination to continue that positive trend. They are now fully responsible for that transition.

Côte d'Ivoire is now in a position to continue moving forward. As the Council recalled in resolution 2284 (2016), this means we need to continue to address the important challenges that remain, and as the Special Representative has pointed out, the last few months have highlighted in particular the need to finalize the security sector reform and reintegrate the ex-combatants. This is an imperative for ensuring lasting stability in the country.

The Government of Côte d'Ivoire has clearly expressed its determination to tackle these issues and to complete professionalizing its security forces. We welcome and support this commitment just as we support the announcement of the strengthening of the country's participation in peacekeeping. This decision represents a way of organizing what is to come. We welcome its first illustration with the deployment under way of an Ivorian contingent within the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali.

We also welcome the actions taken by the Government of Côte d'Ivoire to strengthen social cohesion, which need to continue. The fight against impunity is also a constant imperative, particularly

with regard to the crimes committed during the post-election crisis. Only fair and equitable justice, which judges violations regardless of who are their perpetrators, will be able to consolidate and sustain the stabilization of the country. Progress in this area, nationally as well as in cooperation with the International Criminal Court, will be decisive for the purpose of lasting reconciliation.

The closure of UNOCI does not mean, however, that the country will be left alone to face the challenges that persist. As many other States do, Côte d'Ivoire will continue to benefit from the support of the United Nations through several channels. The agencies, funds and programmes operating on its territory assembled within the country team will continue to help with the country's recovery. Identifying the priority areas within the action plan signed with the Government in 2016 is particularly useful in this regard. We call on international donors to support the country team in this undertaking. The United Nations will also continue to support Côte d'Ivoire as will its neighbours through the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, whose mandate covers the entire subregion. Côte d'Ivoire should also be able to count on the constant commitment of its bilateral and multilateral partners in all fields.

Thanks to the strong links between our two countries in all areas, France is committed to Côte d'Ivoire. We will continue to support the country in its economic and social development, as well as in capacity-building, particularly in security and defence, through bilateral cooperation. We will also continue to support the deep and constant engagement of the European Union with Côte d'Ivoire.

When the conditions are right, the best legacy a peacekeeping operation can leave behind is to pass the torch to the host country in order to anchor long-term stability. This is the meaning of our meeting today on Côte d'Ivoire. We are very happy about this for Côte d'Ivoire, for the Security Council and for the United Nations.

Mr. Seck (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): I align myself with the words of the President in condemning the terrorist attacks in Kabul. In so doing, I wish to reiterate the condolences of Senegal to the families of the victims and to the people and the Government of Afghanistan.

The Senegalese delegation would like to congratulate Bolivia on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. We also wish to warmly congratulate the delegation of Côte d'Ivoire, as well as the delegations of Equatorial Guinea, Kuwait, the Netherlands, Poland and Peru on their outstanding election this morning as non-permanent members of the Security Council for the biennium 2018-2019.

Through the Ivorian Minister for Foreign Affairs here with us today and his delegation, I wish to reiterate the warmest congratulations of Senegal to Côte d'Ivoire on its brilliant election to the Security Council. To Ms. Mindaoudou, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI), the Senegalese delegation offers its congratulations both for her comprehensive briefing and, above all, for the remarkable manner in which she fulfilled mission in our sister country of Côte d'Ivoire and helped it achieve stability.

Ms. Mindaoudou's briefing allows me to dispense with revisiting the situation in Côte d'Ivoire, but like other speakers who have preceded me I would like to state that today, 2 June, is clearly and truly historic and rich in symbols for our sister Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, which this morning was elected a non-permanent member of the Security Council and then comes to the Council this afternoon for a final briefing on the end of the United Nations Mission there. With its experience as a host country of a United Nations mission, which is, as Ms. Mindaoudou said, a success story in all respects, Côte d'Ivoire is leaving the agenda of the Security Council and coming to sit at the table of this body to make a significant contribution to the work of the Council for the next two years.

We believe that the political resolve of the senior authorities in Côte d'Ivoire, which has so far prevailed, will persevere and grow stronger in addressing the remaining challenges, particularly in the security field. In our view, the implementation and operationalization of the law on military programming will be a decisive step in this direction, as it will strengthen training and discipline within the Ivorian army. With regard to the threat posed by the spread of violent extremism and terrorism in the subregion, the action of the Ivorian authorities, working in close cooperation with neighbouring countries, to strengthen the measures taken against this increasing threat to subregion is warmly welcomed.

We must be sure to consolidate and entrench the gains made in the stabilizing Côte d'Ivoire. To that end, alongside the Government of Côte d'Ivoire, the United Nations country team, the Economic Community of West African States, the African Union, the United Nations and all bilateral and multilateral partners must remain watchful and continue supporting Côte d'Ivoire in its efforts to make peace permanent. In this regard, the delegation of Senegal welcomes the United Nations country team's effort to draft a $50-million joint peacebuilding programme following the departure of UNOCI.

I cannot conclude without paying well-deserved tribute to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. Aïchatou Mindaoudou. Obviously, the commitment of my country has been constant, in particular through the rapid intervention force and the aviation unit that we deployed within UNOCI, and through the ceasefire agreement of 17 October 2002 between the mutineers and the loyalists mediated by Senegal.

In conclusion, I would like to invite the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, Mr. Mohammed Ibn Chambas, to continue following the situation in Côte d'Ivoire as part of his regional mandate.

Mr. Kawamura (Japan): I would like to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Mindaoudou for her comprehensive briefing. I would also like to welcome His Excellency Mr. Marcel Amon-Tanoh, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Côte d'Ivoire, to the Council. It is a pleasure to have him in the Chamber for this final briefing on the successful completion of the 14-year mission of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI).

Please allow me to commend Special Representative of the Secretary-General Mindaoudou and all UNOCI staff, past and present, including those who lost their lives, for their dedication to supporting a better future for Côte d'Ivoire. The country has made great progress in consolidating its economic and security gains. The result of the Security Council election this morning symbolizes and affirms these achievements.

The 14 years of activity of UNOCI offer a rich storehouse of lessons on peacekeeping. While the magnitude and complexity of issues may differ, the Council should continue to apply lessons from Côte d'Ivoire to its ongoing work on peacekeeping, especially in Africa. In particular, UNOCI has demonstrated that comprehensive and nationally owned security sector reform and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration are key tools for successful peace processes, as well as for preventing the recurrence of conflicts.

We have also seen how unresolved disarmament, demobilization and reintegration issues, including incomplete socioeconomic reintegration of former soldiers, can impact even a well-designed security sector reform programme and improved security architecture. We are confident that Côte d'Ivoire will continue to enhance the professionalism and accountability of the security sector under the coordination of its National Security Council.

Côte d'Ivoire will not be alone in these tasks. Together with other international partners and the United Nations country team, Japan will continue to support Côte d'Ivoire's efforts in sustaining peace, but this month marks a milestone in Côte d'Ivoire's development.

I would like to conclude by, once again, congratulating UNOCI, as well as the people and Government of Côte d'Ivoire, on their achievements.

Mr. Iliichev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. Aichatou Mindaoudou, for her comprehensive briefing on the internal political situation in the country and the conclusion of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI).

We welcome the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, Mr. Amon-Tano, and we sincerely congratulate him on his country's election as a non-permanent member of the Security Council for 2018-2019. We wish his country every success in its cooperation on the issues on the Council's agenda. The rich experience of Ivorians in post-conflict reconstruction is of particular interest in that regard and I am sure they will share their experience with the international community.

We note the success of Yamoussoukro in the sphere of national reconciliation, State-building and promoting political reforms in the country. We want to underscore that the successful holding of a referendum at the end of last year on the new Constitution and of parliamentary elections confirmed the maturity of the

political forces in the country and their ability settle differences through peaceful means. Clearly, there is trend towards stability following the 2010 and 2011 electoral crises. In this regard, we note the contribution made by the Government, which took unprecedented measures to organize a political dialogue with the opposition. We hope that the authorities will continue to make serious efforts to increase the representation of women in governing bodies.

The Constitution's provisions on land, citizenship and national identity are promising and give us hope for a final elimination of the root causes of the conflict. We are confident that Yamoussoukro will soon overcome the challenges posed by outbreaks of social tension. We take note of the agreements reached between the country's authorities and ex-combatants who are integrated into the armed forces, which enabled them to quell the protests. In this regard, we urge the Ivorians to concentrate their efforts on addressing priority tasks, such as security sector reform; the implementation of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants programme; and the return of refugees from Liberia to the country. In addition, the processes of national reconciliation and of eliminating the dividing lines in society, including those related to victor's justice, must continue.

We must bear in mind that, in the West African region, terrorist groups have strengthened and we have been seeing occasional appearances of their emissaries in the north of the country, on the border with Mali. Côte d'Ivoire is also becoming a victim of terrorist attacks. In this regard, we urge Yamoussoukro to continue to place priority on the issues of security and illegal arms trafficking.

We greatly value Côte d'Ivoire's position on regional stability. We welcome sending the Ivorian military into the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali. We hope that Côte d'Ivoire will also continue to be accountable and approach logistical issues responsibly. We cannot overstate its role there.

We note that the transfer of the remaining tasks from UNOCI to the United Nations country teams has been carried out in an orderly manner. We are happy that the withdrawal of the mission is in accordance with the time frame. In conclusion, we, once again, encourage our Ivorian partners to fully cooperate with the Council.

Mr. Wilson (United Kingdom): As this is our first public session in your presidency, I congratulate you, Mr. President, and wish you good luck. I would also like to thank Uruguay for its very efficient and open presidency last month.

I join others in thanking Special Representative Mindaoudou for her briefing and for her tireless efforts over the past years and for her commitment to a sustained peace. I also want to welcome the Foreign Minister of Côte d'Ivoire to the Council and we really look forward to hearing from him shortly.

We meet today at a significant moment for the Government and people of Côte d'Ivoire. By the end of the month, the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) will close after 13 years of service. In that time, Côte d'Ivoire has been transformed. A child born when the first UNOCI peacekeeper set foot in Côte d'Ivoire would have entered a world of uncertainty and insecurity. Today, that child is living in a country with real prospects not just for peace, but also for opportunity and prosperity. I congratulate the Special Representative and all her team for all they have done to help make this a reality. UNOCI has been an exemplary operation, one that has enjoyed an excellent relationship with the Government and with civil society and, importantly, one that it is now leaving harmoniously and at the right moment.

As their mission nears its end, we must never forget that such stability did not come without cost; 150 military and civilian United Nations personnel have lost their lives in Côte d'Ivoire over the past 13 years. The legacy of their sacrifice and of all their service must be a sustained peace in Côte d'Ivoire. With that in mind, I congratulate the Government for capitalizing on the space that UNOCI has given them. The country now has one of the fastest growing economies in the world. We stand with it as it continues along this positive pathway redoubling its efforts to ensure that all Ivorians feel the benefits brought by peace through social development.

Progress in Côte d'Ivoire is not limited to just the economy. I also want to draw Council members attention to the Secretary-General's recently published report on conflict-related sexual violence (S/2017/249), a topic that is of particular concern to the United Kingdom. With this report came the welcome news that the armed forces of Côte d'Ivoire have been delisted. That means that Côte d'Ivoire is now able to contribute

to United Nations peacekeeping missions, and it has recently sent a contingent to Mali. To move from a nation benefitting from a peacekeeping mission to one that now contributes to peacekeeping is yet another marker of success.

There can be no let up. There are tests ahead for Côte d'Ivoire. The 2015 presidential elections were peaceful, but of course UNOCI was present. The presidential elections in 2020 and a smooth democratic transfer of power to a new president will be crucial to building a peaceful and prosperous future for Côte d'Ivoire. This needs continued efforts to build the independence, credibility and authority of the electoral commission over the next two years. The credibility and legitimacy of the institutions of Government must continue to strengthen.

As the recent unrest in the country illustrates, peace can be fragile if underlying issues are not resolved. I therefore encourage the Government of Côte d'Ivoire to make the most of this opportunity that it and the United Nations have worked so hard for.

In conclusion, the story of Côte d'Ivoire is a positive one, with the end of a successful mission and an optimistic future for the country and its people. It is also a positive story for the United Nations and specifically for the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. UNOCI shows how clear mandates with a clear exit strategy can create the space needed for the political process to progress. It is a model that we should seek to emulate elsewhere across the world. I am delighted that the experience is something that Côte d'Ivoire will be able to share on a daily basis with the Council when it joins in 2018. I congratulate the country on its election earlier today.

Mr. Bermúdez (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to begin my statement by wishing you, Sir, and your team every success in your duties as your country presides over the Security Council during the month of June. I also sincerely thank Council members for commending us on our recently concluded presidency.

We thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General,Ms. Aïchatou Mindaoudou, for her comprehensive briefing, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Côte d'Ivoire, Mr. Marcel Amon-Tanoh, for being here today.

We take this opportunity to congratulate the delegation of Côte d'Ivoire on its recent election as a non-permanent member of the Security Council and we wish the country every success during its mandate. We also hope that the Security Council can benefit not only from Côte d'Ivoire's commitment to international peace and security, but also from its experience in successfully emerging from conflict with the support of a United Nations peacekeeping operation. Uruguay would also like to congratulate the Government and the people of Côte d'Ivoire on their achievements to date, which are, without a doubt, worthy of recognition.

Just over a year ago, in this very Chamber, we ended the Côte d'Ivoire sanctions regime (see S/PV.7681). That step was made possible by the progress that had paved the way for the country to embark on the path to peace and stability. There is no doubt that the country continues to face internal challenges, such as national reconciliation, the reintegration of former combatants and sustainable economic recovery, which must all be addressed and overcome by Ivoirians themselves.

The role of international partners will be key to assisting the country to address the root causes of underlying challenges. Nonetheless, we can proudly declare that Côte d'Ivoire is no longer a threat to international peace and security and that the Security Council has transferred all responsibility for achieving sustained peace in the country to its Government. A period of learning has begun, which will open up the possibility for a promising future for all Ivorians. The situation in Côte d'Ivoire would not have become a success story without the commitment and political will of its Government.

Mr. Liu Jieyi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. Mindaoudou, for her briefing and welcome Foreign Minister Amon-Tanoh to today's meeting.

China congratulates Côte d'Ivoire on its election as a non-permanent member of the Council for the 2018-2019 term and looks forward to intensifying cooperation with Côte d'Ivoire in international affairs with a view to making joint contributions to the maintenance of international peace and security. In recent years, under the leadership of President Ouattara, Côte d'Ivoire has enjoyed political stability and sustained economic and social development, which China commends.

Last year, during China's presidency of the Security Council (see S/PV.7681), the Council adopted resolution 2284 (2016), on the drawdown of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI), and resolution 2283 (2016), on the comprehensive lifting of sanctions against Côte d'Ivoire (see S/PV.7681). That fully reflected the affirmation of the Council and of the international community that there had been considerable improvement in the situation in Côte d'Ivoire. Since 2004, UNOCI has played an important role in maintaining peace and stability in the country. China commends the contribution of UNOCI and the positive efforts of Special Representative Mindaoudou since she assumed office. Following the closure of UNOCI, China hopes that the international community will continue to strengthen cooperation with Côte d'Ivoire with a view to helping the country achieve sustained peace, stability and development.

United Nations peacekeeping operations are an important means of maintaining international peace and security. UNOCI's successful experience is worth studying with a view to drawing lessons from it. Based on developments in the situation on the ground, China believes that the United Nations peacekeeping operation should make timely adjustments to its scale ahead of its final drawdown and closure. Meanwhile, it is imperative to fully respect the will of the host country and enhance coordination with countries in the region, as well as regional and subregional organizations.

Nine out of the sixteen United Nations peacekeeping missions are located in Africa. Peace and stability in Africa matter greatly to international peace and security. China has consistently supported Africa in resolving African issues through African means, as well as regional and subregional organizations, such as the African Union, in playing an active role in resolving local issues. China stands ready to work with the international community to provide ownership and capacity-building assistance to Africa so as to make greater contributions to the maintenance of international peace and security.

Mr. Cardi (Italy) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. Mindaoudou, for her briefing. We commend the progress made in preparing for the closure of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI). I take this opportunity to thank Ms. Mindaoudou for her efforts and to congratulate her, the Secretariat and the UNOCI staff, who have all contributed to the mission's success for many years.

I would also like to recognize Minister Amon-Tanoh and congratulate him on his country's election to the Security Council for the 2018-2019 term, which is the culmination of Côte d'Ivoire's journey to stability over the years. I should also like to congratulate the other newly elected non-permanent members of the Security Council, in particular the Netherlands, with which we share a Security Council seat.

The stage we are at today is a precursor to the closure of the mission in Côte d'Ivoire, which is an important juncture in the country's recent history and that of United Nations peacekeeping operations in general. For Côte d'Ivoire, it reaffirms the journey to stability on which the country has embarked. Similarly, we commend the determination of the United Nations to remain committed to the country, through its political presence and coordination efforts under the regional office of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, because the outcome achieved by UNOCI is a legacy to be preserved.

We have closely followed recent political developments, which constitute a vital stage in the history of Côte d'Ivoire and in the changes made to its Constitution, once again highlighting the country's resolute commitment to democratic principles. Italy will continue to support the country on that path at the bilateral level, as well as in our work at the United Nations and in the European Union, which remains one of Côte d'Ivoire's main partners.

The stability of Côte d'Ivoire first and foremost meets the aspirations of the Ivoirian people, but it is also a priority for the international community. International and regional dynamics, especially in the area of security, require considerable commitment, in particular on the part of countries, such as Côte d'Ivoire, that have historically played the role of regional stabilizer. We would also wish to see Côte d'Ivoire play an active role in fighting the scourges threatening peace and security in the regional and Sahelian dimensions. In that regard, the fact that Côte d'Ivoire is again a troop-contributing country in Mali demonstrates the country's focus on the regional dynamic.

Moreover, the priorities on which the Ivorian candidacy for Council membership is based — such as the fight against terrorism, illegal trafficking, illicit immigration and piracy, as well as promoting

and protecting human rights — are in our view an important sign of that commitment. In that respect, I offer Côte d'Ivoire the full support of Italy in order to obtain these goals.

In recent months, we have on occasion wondered about the tools available to us to make peacekeeping operations more effective. The lesson to be drawn from the case of Côte d'Ivoire is that the leadership and unity of the Security Council, which the Council has demonstrated at considerable cost, are prerequisites to ensuring the success of peacekeeping operations, together with the commitment of the host country to do everything possible to pursue the goals of peace and stability. I am convinced that the direct experience that Côte d'Ivoire will be able to offer in terms of understanding the pluses and minuses of United Nations peacekeeping activities will add important value to its membership of the Security Council.

Today is Republic Day in Italy. I am happy that this day, which is a day of celebration for us, is also one on which Côte d'Ivoire has reached an important turning point in its history.

Mr. Aboulatta (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, allow me to welcome His Excellency, Mr. Marcel Amon-Tanoh, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire. I congratulate him on the well-deserved election of his country as a non-permanent member of the Security Council for the period 2018-2019 earlier today, which is of obvious significance.

Today, Côte d'Ivoire is turning the page and moving past its crisis once and for all. Côte d'Ivoire, a brotherly country, will, through its membership in the Council, once again play a deserved role in the international arena as a representative of the African continent and a defender of its people's interests. In that regard, I would like to assure the Minister that Egypt will continue to promote its ongoing cooperation and coordination with Côte d'Ivoire and provide the necessary support to the country as it fulfils its role.

Allow me also to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. Aïchatou Mindaoudou, for her valuable briefing and appreciated efforts, and the civilian and military personnel of United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) for their hard work. They have played a pivotal role in leading to the current watershed moment. The Council celebrates this turning point as the peacekeeping mission ends in Côte d'Ivoire and the national authorities return to governing all of the country's affairs. Optimism prevails regarding a more stable and prosperous future at all political, economic and security levels.

UNOCI would not have been successful in achieving its goals had it not been for the national and popular political atmosphere, which facilitated a diligent approach to shaping Côte d'Ivoire's future. In addition, regional and international stakeholders unified their vision for Côte d'Ivoire, aware of their role in supporting Côte d'Ivoire in ending the crisis. They helped make it happen.

The successful closure of UNOCI is only the start of a new phase, anchored in peace and stability, that will help Côte d'Ivoire to achieve sustainable development. The successes in Côte d'Ivoire deserve to be celebrated, but the remaining challenges deserve our full attention. We are confident in the ability of the Ivorian Government and people to make further progress on their current path. However, the international community must also continue to provide necessary support.

In conclusion, the Council celebrates the closure of a success story that was not easy. The mission faced challenges, difficulties and failures. Had it not been for the determination of stakeholders to overcome such hurdles, we would not have reached this point today. We believe it important to draw lessons from UNOCI that will help us in dealing with similar crises. We therefore call on the Secretariat to conduct a comprehensive study of the role of the United Nations and the international community in the settlement of the Ivorian crisis. The study should include an objective analysis of the mandate and role of the peacekeeping operation, the contributions of political mediation, the effects of sanctions regimes, and all factors related to the international community's perspective with respect to the crisis.

Once again, I wish the people and the Government of Côte d'Ivoire success.

Mr. Alemu (Ethiopia): Let me start by expressing my appreciation to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. Aïchatou Mindaoudou, for her briefing and for the successful work that she and her team have carried out in order to ensure the successful completion of the mandate of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI).

I would also like to thank His Excellency, Mr. Marcel Amon-Tanoh, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire. I take this opportunity to extend our warmest congraulations to him on the election of Côte d'Ivoire as a non-permanent member of the Security Council for the period of 2018-2019. I look forward to working closely with his country in the Council.

The closure of UNOCI marks a significant milestone, both for Côte d'Ivoire and for the United Nations. Over the past 13 years, UNOCI has worked to promote the rule of law, national reconciliation, security sector reform, the protection of civilians and human rights in Côte d'Ivoire, thereby contributing to the restoration of peace and stability in the country. We hope that the experience of UNOCI will provide useful lessons for similar missions in the future. Without a doubt, the progress made over the past 13 years would not have been possible without the active participation of the people and Government of Côte d'Ivoire. The leadership and commitment of the Government to undertake necessary reform should be commended.

We are confident that the efforts of the Government aimed at fostering greater unity and national reconciliation will continue. Without a doubt, the need for greater unity and national reconciliation have been made self-evident by recent developments. The country certainly needs the continued support of the international community as it strives to sustain peace and consolidate the political and economic gains made in recent years. Therefore, the sustained engagement of the United Nations country team remains very important. We are encouraged to note that the handing over of commitment from UNOCI to the country team took place in line with the plan established for the transition.

Let me conclude by paying tribute to the entire ONOCI team, including the military and civilian personnel, for their dedication and service.

Mr. Skau (Sweden) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, let me congratulate you, Mr. President, and your team on assuming the presidency. We wish you great success in your work. I also wish to thank our friends from Uruguay for their exemplary work last month.

(*spoke in English*)

Let me begin by thanking the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. Mindaoudou, for her comprehensive briefing this afternoon. As this is likely to be our last opportunity to take the floor on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI), we would like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation for the valuable efforts and important work of the mission over the past 13 years and to pay tribute to the women and men who have served in that mission over the years. I thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for her leadership and personal commitment during this important last and final phase.

Today is a day of transition for Côte d'Ivoire. We are gathered here this afternoon to discuss the closing of a peacekeeping mission, while only a few short hours ago Côte d'Ivoire was elected to serve on the Security Council. I congratulate Minister Marcel Amon-Tanoh and his team here in New York on their election this morning and we look forward to working with them next year in the Council.

We welcome the continued progress of peace and security in Côte d'Ivoire. The closing of UNOCI at the end of the month represents an important milestone and a new chapter in the history of the country. As the country begins to chart its way forward, I would like to make three points.

First of all, while we have many reasons to celebrate, this is not the end of the road for Côte d'Ivoire as it works to consolidate a stable and secure society for all Ivorians. It is important that we pay attention to the latest developments on the ground, in particular the second incidence of mutiny by soldiers, which occurred last month. Those developments are serious and demand a serious response. They underline the clear need for the Government to carry out meaningful reform of the security sector, including restructuring forces and enhancing cohesion, discipline and accountability. A reformed security sector will help build the population's confidence in the security institutions.

In addition, women's participation is of paramount importance to fostering sustainable and inclusive peace. The final report of the Secretary-General (S/2017/89) illustrates the potential for the increased participation of women in the political process, and we urge the United Nations country team to contribute to ensuring the participation of women and youth in the transition process.

Secondly, as UNOCI closes its mission, there is a need for continued international engagement.

It is important that Côte d'Ivoire's partners provide ongoing support to the Government's efforts to sustain peace and safeguard the investments already made in a sustainable future. The African Union and the Economic Community of West African States have played a key role in achieving a successful outcome to the Ivorian peace process. Going forward, regional actors will continue to have an essential role to play.

Thirdly, regarding the transition from UNOCI to the United Nations country team, we welcome the robust transition plan developed by the United Nations and agreed with the Government at the end of last year, but we note that the closing of UNOCI means that the United Nations presence in the country will face a financial cliff, which jeopardizes the sustainability of the gains achieved. We believe that the United Nations can do even better in ensuring that transitions in general are transformative and forward-looking processes. More systematic and integrated work across the United Nations system is needed sooner. We have a joint responsibility to ensure that United Nations country teams have that capability.

In conclusion, I would like to join the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in commending the Government and the people of Côte d'Ivoire for their resilience and their efforts to restore peace and stability to their country, with the support of the international community. The closure of the UNOCI mission underlines the remarkable journey the country has made since 2004. The international community must now continue to support the Government and the people of Côte d'Ivoire as they work to build a peaceful, equitable and prosperous country for all Ivorians.

Mr. Yelchenko (Ukraine): I too want to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Aïchatou Mindaoudou for her comprehensive briefing. Since this is the last briefing on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) in this Chamber, I would like to take this opportunity to convey our sincere appreciation to the mission's leadership and personnel for their contribution. Ukraine prides itself on playing an active role in UNOCI.

On 30 June, the UNOCI mandate will end on a high note, signifying the successful completion of the United Nations peacekeeping phase in Côte d'Ivoire. Many efforts and resources have been invested in the stabilization of the country. As we can see today, they have produced encouraging results. The prospects for Cote d'Ivoire appear promising. Significant progress has been achieved in restoring State authority throughout the country, rebuilding the security sector and promoting national cohesion and reconciliation.

Moreover, we see a country that has been entrusted by the entire United Nations membership to be in the Security Council not as a country under its agenda, but rather as an elected member. I therefore want to take this opportunity to congratulate Minister Amon-Tanoh on the successful outcome of Cote d'Ivoire's campaign in the Security Council. Next month, Côte d'Ivoire will also host a major international event — the summit of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation — which is another sign of the trust and respect of the international community.

Côte d'Ivoire is now at peace, but many chronic problems still have to be addressed. That requires a long-term action plan involving national actors, the United Nations, the African Union and other relevant stakeholders. The potential threats to national stability should be no longer perceived solely in terms of hard security, but rather in terms of socioeconomic impact. The recent mutinies in the country therefore require the country's leadership to redouble its efforts to turn peace into concrete dividends for all its citizens. Ukraine is committed to further supporting Cote d'Ivoire along that road — both in the Council and beyond.

Mr. Gee (United States): I thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for her briefing. I also join others in welcoming the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Côte d'Ivoire to the Security Council and congratulating him on his country's election, today, as a non-permanent member. We also congratulate the other new members elected today and look forward to working with all new members next year.

It is a momentous occasion when a peacekeeping mission can close after having successfully completed its work to stabilize and support a country emerging from conflict. We applaud the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, her staff and all the staff of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) who have contributed to the mission over its 13 years.

In just four weeks UNOCI will shut its door for good, bringing to an end a mission that provided critical support during the 2003 peace agreement and the 2010 political crisis. UNOCI supported efforts to protect civilians, promote good governance, human

rights, security sector reform and humanitarian assistance. Côte d'Ivoire is a success story and a model of how peacekeeping can benefit a country if its Government is committed to overcoming conflict and restoring peace.

We look forward to seeing the Government of Côte d'Ivoire maintain that positive momentum and cement the peace and security that has taken root with the support of the international community. Despite significant progress on key reforms, recent events have shown that challenges remain. The January and May mutinies in the armed forces over pay grievances resulted in the disruption of commerce, the closure of schools and increased civilian insecurity. The mutinies and accompanying protests also led to scores of injuries and several fatalities in confrontations with authorities. We urge the Government to work transparently, inclusively and without delay to accelerate and deepen efforts to reform the security sector, including by shaping a clear structure and purpose for the military based on the threats Côte d'Ivoire faces.

Finally, as we approach the end of UNOCI, we know that smart planning between a mission in transition, the Government, other international partners and a United Nations country team has been essential during the handover of mission tasks. In Côte d'Ivoire, a high level of cooperation in planning for the future led to the smooth transition happening today. We encourage the United Nations to institutionalize lessons learned and apply them to other missions in transition, such as those in Liberia and Haiti. We also encourage other countries hosting peacekeeping missions to recognize the importance of strong cooperation between the Government and the United Nations without impediments to movement and access in performing the missions' mandated tasks.

Once again, we congratulate all who worked together to bring peace and stability to Côte d'Ivoire over these past years.

Mr. Umarov (Kazakhstan): I congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council and wish you a successful term.

Our delegation also welcomes His Excellency the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Côte d'Ivoire to the Chamber and congratulates his country on its election as a non-permanent member of the Security Council. We are looking forward to working with his delegation and wish his country every success.

My delegation would like to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Mindaoudou for her final update on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI). I join others in congratulating her for her outstanding and courageous leadership in fulfilling the mission's mandate.

We welcome the successful termination of UNOCI after 13 years of dedicated service for the cause of peace. The success of UNOCI in bringing stability to the country is the shared achievement of the Government and the people of Côte d'Ivoire, the United Nations, the Security Council and the troop-contributing countries. The role of regional organizations — especially the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States and the International Organization of la Francophonie — has also been significant in fulfilling the mandate. Kazakhstan is proud to be part of that process as a country that sent military observers to Côte d'Ivoire.

We commend the Government of Côte d'Ivoire for the remarkable progress we are seeing in the country, which is a clear demonstration of its desire to fully own the future course of its progress. UNOCI has many lessons to teach future peacekeeping operations. We acknowledge Côte d'Ivoire's positive steps towards transferring its national institutional framework and response against transnational organized crime threats, including terrorism. The gains achieved must continue to overcome the remaining challenges by fostering national dialogue and political reconciliation. Focus should be given to social cohesion, weapons management, defence, capacity-building, security and law enforcement, fighting sexual violence and protecting children.

To reinforce all these measures means having implementation partners and meeting resource requirements for supporting the Government of Côte d'Ivoire in delivering on expectations. We therefore call for international assistance and necessary support for the Government and the United Nations country team. We look forward to a productive and fruitful cooperation with Côte d'Ivoire as a non-permanent member of the Security Council.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of the Plurinational State of Bolivia.

First of all, I would like to thank the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Côte d'Ivoire, Mr. Marcel

Amon-Tanoh, for his presence. It is indeed a privilege for us to have him in the Security Council Chamber this afternoon.

I would also like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Côte d'Ivoire and Head of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI), Ms. Aïchatou Mindaoudou, for the updated information she has just presented as well as for her excellent leadership. We would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate all her predecessors and the civilian and military personnel of UNOCI for their commitment to peace and stability in Côte d'Ivoire. We are grateful for and acknowledge their work done over the years as well as UNOCI's contribution in terms of lessons learned, which are an important contribution to United Nations peacekeeping missions.

We commend the countries, regional and multilateral organizations, including the African Union and the United Nations Office for West Africa, the United Nations agencies and country teams, and all those countries that contributed military and police contingents that assisted day after day in bringing peace to this kindred country. Without the cooperation and work of these organizations, the objectives of UNOCI would have been difficult to achieve. Proof of this is the certification of the 2010 election results by the African Union, at the request of Côte d'Ivoire, and the peace agreements signed through that organization.

Bolivia hails the people and the Government of Côte d'Ivoire and encourages their efforts towards national dialogue, peacebuilding, political reconciliation, disarmament and the reintegration of ex-combatants into society. The international community must continue its work of cooperation, paving the way for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in Côte d'Ivoire with full respect for its sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity.

We commend the country for its economic growth, which has been remarkable. We acknowledge the efforts of the President, the Government and the people of Côte d'Ivoire in succesfully consolidating a stable political environment with three elections that have taken place peacefully and for the progress they have made in the process of reforming the security sector and in rebuilding the military.

We are encouraged to learn that the stakeholders believe that the peace process in Cote d'Ivoire is irreversible. We see success in the peace process as an opportunity for the Security Council to use the example and experience of our Ivorian brothers and sisters, whose witness and knowledge should enrich us, in order to do everything we can to promote a just, honourable and lasting peace for all.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Relations of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire.

Mr. Amon-Tanoh (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, His Excellency Mr. Alassane Ouattara, and the Ivorian Government, I wish every success to the Bolivian presidency of the Security Council and pay tribute to Uruguay for the effective way in which it steered the deliberations of this important body last month.

I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for the opportunity to address the Council on this occasion of historic importance to my country and the Organization. Indeed, rare are the moments when the success of a United Nations peacekeeping operation, such as that which brings us together today around the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI), has been celebrated in the Chamber.

This is an opportune time for me to pay tribute to Secretaries-General Kofi Annan and Ban Ki-moon, who through their actions made a major contribution to resolving the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire. I would also like to pay tribute to the current Secretary-General and thank him for his support for my country in his previous functions and for the special attention that he has continued to pay to Côte d'Ivoire since his election. Our thanks also go to all the Member States that served on the Security Council during the crisis in my country and to all those that have made their troops available to UNOCI. In particular, I would like to pay tribute to those soldiers who made the ultimate sacrifice for the return of peace to Côte d'Ivoire.

Today's celebration is of very special importance for us as it coincides with my country's election this morning as a non-permanent member of the Security Council for the 2018-2019 term. This is a symbolic moment, and we place great hopes on the lessons and experience drawn by Côte d'Ivoire from the 13 years of UNOCI's presence in my country and which will,

in the course of our mandate in the Security Council, provide an example for other countries to follow.

The meetings I have had with all the States Members of the United Nations over the past few months, and especially the past three weeks, have enabled us to share their expectations. We are confirmed in our decision to work within the Security Council in order to come up with coherent collective responses to the global challenges of our time through dialogue and mutual respect. I thank everyone for the kind words expressed to my country and for the welcome that was extended to us on our candidacy and thus our election to the Council. Allow me, in turn, to express to the Council and all the other States Members of our Organization the gratitude of the President, the Government and the nation of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire.

Time will certainly allow us to further clarify the elements that have led to the success of UNOCI. For the time being, we can rightly stress that the success of UNOCI arises from the convergence of several factors, including the political will and high sense of responsibility of the President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, which have put the State and its resources at the service of peace in its country. It is also due to the exceptional synergy between UNOCI and the Government and to the unity and resolve of the Security Council and the international community, which have facilitated the implementation of the Council's resolutions in all confidence. I would also cite the strong human relations between the President of the Republic and the various Secretaries-General of the United Nations, the good relations established between the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Government, and the high quality of the Special Representatives appointed by the various Secretaries-General to Côte d'Ivoire. In that regard, I pay special and well-deserved tribute to Mrs Aïchatou Mindaoudou for her outstanding contribution to peace in my country and to the success of UNOCI.

UNOCI leaves behind a stable and peaceful country endowed with strong and modern institutions, and whose economic dynamism, despite the difficult context of the cocoa market, allows the Government to make significant progress every day in fighting poverty and creating opportunities for its young people. Nonetheless, we are aware of the challenges ahead in the process of establishing stability and peace in our country once and for all. These include completing the construction of a genuinely homogeneous and republican national army. This process has been somewhat unsettled of late by ill-tempered movements of veterans claiming their bonuses. After the final settlement of this issue by the Government and the adoption of strong measures for the benefit of the armed and security forces as a whole, ex-combatants no longer have any objective reason to disturb the tranquility of the Ivorians and the forward movement of the country.

While they do not call into question the quality of my country's emergence from crisis or its important achievements, these ill-tempered movements remind us, as I said in February last year in this Chamber (see S/PV.7880), of the need to accelerate the reform of the security sector and the professionalization of the national army in order to identify and give several thousand soldiers a republican identity and ethos. Our Government is working to that end through the full implementation of the Military Planning Law, whose adoption has been well received by professional soldiers.

The success of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire and its closure will not slow down the pace of the Government's reforms. On the contrary, emphasis will be placed, inter alia, on consolidating the rule of law, strengthening the framework for combating impunity, and accelerating the appropriation of national reconciliation and social cohesion by the Ivorian people. Moreover, the President of the Republic is pursuing his policy of extending his hand and listening to the opposition, in the interests of the country.

As may well be imagined, the cooperation that binds my country to the United Nations will survive the closure of UNOCI and remain an important vehicle for the international community's support to the Ivorian people. To that end, we hope that more resources will be allocated to the country team so that it can fulfil its mandate in better conditions. At the same time, we call on our bilateral and multilateral partners to maintain their commitment to our country and to help us face the major challenges facing all nations today. Our friends must therefore remain more than ever mobilized alongside us in order to win together our tireless battles against poverty and youth unemployment, which are our Government's priorities.

The success of UNOCI is the happy end to a painful sequence in the history of my country. It must not make us forget that thousands of Ivorians

have lost their lives so that the values of peace, unity, conviviality and democracy might triumph in our country. These women and men, torn from the bosoms of their families, and who will miss out on the work of perfecting our nation, forbid us forever to allow new tragedies to visit our country.

In conclusion, I would like to assure the Security Council of the determination of the Ivorian people to defend and preserve the peace so dearly won, with the support of the friends of Côte d'Ivoire.

The meeting rose at 4.35 p.m.